

Group Show “emerging japanese painters”**Dates: Mar 30 – May 9, 2021****Location: SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery, Hong Kong****Participating artists: Satoru Kurata, Reina Mikame, Yu Nishimura, Tomohiro Takahashi, Masanori Tomita****By appointment only****Please email tighk@takaishiigallery.com**

SHOP Taka Ishii Gallery is pleased to present “emerging japanese painters” from March 30 – May 9, 2021 in cooperation with KAYOKOYUKI, Yutaka Kikutake Gallery and Tomio Koyama Gallery. The group exhibition will feature figurative and abstract paintings that explore the human perception of the everyday scenes and objects through the unique perspectives of Satoru Kurata, Reina Mikame, Yu Nishimura, Tomohiro Takahashi and Masanori Tomita.

Constructing their canvases as a stage, Kurata and Takahashi frequently feature animalized characters in their works. “Rather than cutting out a part of the existing landscape, [painting to me] is more like setting up a new framework and arranging people and props on it to build a world,” commented Kurata. Metaphorically, the artist depicts masked humans or anthropomorphic animals pointing to the social mask (persona) people are living with. In the search for the ideal and contextual facial expressions through his own stream of consciousness, Kurata’s characters’ appearance and clothes are often heavily modified during the production process, and his solid technique gives sculptural forms to the masks created. Presenting a monkey-like figure in “Slow Dawn” (2021), viewers are encouraged to imagine what he/she/it is gazing at. While in Takahashi’s painting, the contrast between the bare canvas and the children’s craft background highlights the toys centered. Inspired by a significant stuffed animal he cherishes, the artist continues to stage toys that take living creatures forms, which are widely perceived as symbols of comfort, compassion and acceptance. His bright canvases enlarge many childhood motifs with realist details, like the wall doodles in “hide-and-peek” (2021) and the dollhouse in “ONE’S” (2020), giving viewers a sense of familiarity.

The other paintings by Nishimura, Mikame and Tomita present a sense of movement and time that suggest the fluidity of our bodily perception. Rendering the outer forms of his subjects with faint brushstroke and overlaid layers, the misaligned contours form a wavering image in Nishimura’s picture plane and seem to capture different times in a frame. Fabricating his memories of the everyday life details onto his paintings, Nishimura’s new works present some of his common themes including human portraits, birds, cats, fruits, and suburban landscapes. The nature motifs are also seen in Mikame’s oeuvre, in which the artist focuses on painting the ocean, sunlight and flowers based on her internalized experience of the surroundings and sketches made during her special journeys. They include her revisit to places in her childhood memories and her trip to Europe. Although her flowers in “Looking at the light” (2021) and the “Flower Stall” series (2019) are quiet and still, the artist indicates the movement of light by the patches of colors employed, pointing to the role of illumination in our visual perception of the subject’s color. Similarly, Tomita’s paintings take inspiration from the sketches of scenes and details of his environment. The artist has focused on abstract expression through thick and solidified paint, where he projects his momentary feelings to his works and allows diverse expressions and actions in one canvas. Traces of Tomita’s perceptions can be observed in detail in each of his four canvases, including the use of white paint which represents moments that are lost in his consciousness.



Satoru Kurata

“Slow Dawn”, 2021

Oil on canvas

27.3 x 22 cm

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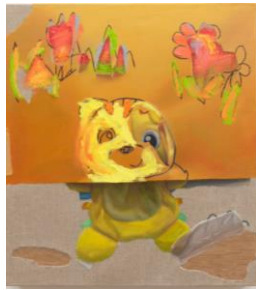
Courtesy of Tomio Koyama Gallery



Reina Mikame
"Flower Stall", 2019
Oil on canvas
27.3 x 22 cm
© Reina Mikame
Courtesy of Yutaka Kikutake Gallery



Yu Nishimura
"enemy line", 2021
Tempera on canvas
16.3 x 27.4 cm
© Yu Nishimura
Courtesy of KAYOKOYUKI



Tomohiro Takahashi
"hide-and-seek", 2021
Oil on panel
41 x 37 cm
© Tomohiro Takahashi



Masanori Tomita
"cap", 2019
Oil on canvas
33.3 x 24.2 cm
© Masanori Tomita
Courtesy of KAYOKOYUKI

Artist Biographies

Satoru Kurata (b. 1991) was born in Tokyo. Currently lives and works in Tokyo. Kurata graduated with a B.F.A. in Painting from the College of Art and Design, Musashino Art University, after which he studied abroad at the Universität der Künste Berlin, Germany. In 2017 he completed his M.F.A. in Painting at the Graduate School of Art and Design, Musashino Art University. His recent solo exhibitions include "Ba/u/cker La/u/cker" (Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, 2021), "Weird Void" (Musashino Art University FAL, Tokyo, 2020), and "Memories of Ajewarlae" (Tokyo Wonder Site Shibuya, Tokyo, 2016). He also participated in group shows, such as the two-person exhibitions with Yuto Nemoto "Infinite Jest" (CADAN Yurakucho, Tokyo, 2021) and with Yumi Iwasaki "Welcome to Jungle" (Deep Relax, Tokyo, 2020).

Reina Mikame (b. 1992) was born in Toyota, Aichi Prefecture. Currently lives and works in Tokyo. Mikame received her B.F.A. and M.F.A. in Oil Painting Course from Tama Art University in 2015 and Tokyo University of the Arts in 2017 respectively. Her selected solo exhibitions include "Looking at the color" and "The Weight of Water, The Light that Blurs" at Yutaka Kikutake Gallery, Tokyo (2020, 2018), and "project N 69 Reina Mikame" at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo (2017). She also participated in group shows such as "Beloved Things" (Toyota Garou, Aichi, 2021), "It is a season when the sun

shines brightly against you and you tend to feel sick, but please spend your regular and healthy days." (Seibu Shibuya Art Gallery, Tokyo, 2020), "VOCA2020 - The Vision of Contemporary Art" (The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo, 2020), "Painting" (Taku Sometani Gallery, Tokyo, 2019).

Yu Nishimura (b. 1982) was born in Kanagawa. Currently lives and works in Kanagawa. Nishimura received his B.F.A. in Oil Painting Course, Department of Fine Arts, Faculty of Art and Design, Tama Art University, Tokyo in 2004. His solo shows include "Around October" (KAYOKOYUKI, Tokyo, 2020), "scene of beholder" (Galerie Crevecoeur, Paris, 2020), "Aperto 09 Nishimura Yu - paragraph" (Kanazawa 21st Century Museum, Kanazawa, 2018), "project N 61" (Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery, Tokyo, 2015). His selected group shows include "VOCA2019" (The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo, 2019), "ACT Vol. 1 – First Lingering Mist of Spring" (Tokyo Arts and Space TOKAS Hongo, Tokyo, 2019), "Azamino Contemporary vol.9" (Yokohama Civic Art Gallery Azamino, Kanagawa, 2018), "CONDO Shanghai" (Gallery Vacancy, 2018), "Contemporary Art of The 21st Century, Exhibition of Taguchi Art Collection" (The Hiratsuka Museum of Art, Kanagawa, 2018), "Natsu no Tobira, Organized by Misako and Jeffrey Rosen" (Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, 2017), "FACE 2016: FACE Award Winners -The Way of Paintings 2016" (The Sompō Museum of Art, Tokyo, 2016). Nishimura received the "Koji Kinutani Prize" (2017), "Excellent Work Award, FACE" (2014), "Shell Art Award - Kenjiro Hosaka's Prize" (2013), and "Encouragement Prize" of the 6th Kiyosu City Haruhi Painting Triennale (2009).

Tomohiro Takahashi (b. 1996) was born in Oita. Takahashi received his B.F.A. from Kyoto University of the Arts in 2018 and currently enrolled in a master degree at the same school. His past group exhibitions include "untamed vol.2" (COHJU contemporary art, Kyoto, 2020 – 2021), "SPURT" (Galerie Aube, Kyoto, 2020), "ANTEROOM NAHA Phase 2020" (HOTEL ANTEROOM NAHA, Okinawa, 2020) and "HOP" (Galerie Aube, Kyoto, 2019).

Masanori Tomita (b. 1989) was born in Kumamoto. Currently lives and works in Tokyo. Tomita received his B.F.A. in Oil Painting from Tokyo University of The Arts. His selected solo shows include "Snail Traces" (KAYOKOYUKI, Tokyo, 2018), "quiz" (KAYOKOYUKI, Tokyo, 2016), "mtz2" (TURNER GALLERY, Tokyo, 2012). He also participated in group shows such as "Studio Exhibition" (Satoshi Ohno studio, Yamanashi, 2018), "Hikarie Contemporary Art Eye vol.9 supervised by Tomio Koyama -through the glasses" (Shibuya Hikarie, Tokyo, 2018) and "Inner Flash" (Space Wunderkammer, Tokyo, 2014).

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